

Diffusion and Adoption Reflection

On the use of a Web Cam in the Classroom

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An implementation that is currently being used in the educational setting is the web cam. Web cams can be used for many things. They can be used to send e-mails to family and friends, video-conferencing with co-workers, clients and customers, chatting in real time with other webcam users in Windows Live Messenger or specialty chat rooms, or broadcasting your very own TV-like "channel" over the net.

The setting in which this innovation took place was an on-level inclusion language arts class (7th grade). Students had been learning how to go about having debates, and had been given topics on which they researched pros and cons. Students were organized into groups of four, and instructed to use the rules of debate to present a certain side of their topic. The class was made up of twenty-seven students, and included eight special education students. There were two certified teachers, and one para-professional instructing the class. One of the advantages of using the webcam as opposed to a video camera was so that students could send the videos home to their parents via email. Students were able to review their debates and discuss the things that were done well, and what they could have done in order to improve either their debating skills or their overall presentation in terms of audience appeal. Students eagerly engaged in the use of the webcam, and were excited about being videoed and seeing themselves on camera.

Resources that were used were a laptop, ImageSalsa software, a webcam, hooked up to a USB port, a microphone, which was attached to the microphone jack on the back of the computer. The stakeholders, students themselves, needs and concerns were considered. The innovation was considered to be very successful.

A model that was paralleled was Ely's Condition of change (Ellsworth, 1991, p.60). First consideration was "dissatisfaction with status quo". The use of the webcam here was superior to the use of a video camera, so that the debates could be posted on YouTube, or the internet. Sufficient knowledge and skills to do the job were present. An in-service had been held for teachers who wished to learn how to

use the webcam, and ideas were shared about how it could be used to improve instruction. All of the resources that were needed in order for this innovation to occur were readily available. Our school system is able to provide a wealth of technological supplies, and our school alone has multiple laptops and webcams that can be checked out and used by teachers. There had been plenty of time to learn, adapt, integrate and reflect on the use of this innovation. Rewards and incentives existed for the students and the implementers as well. Students gained benefit from viewing themselves, and gave feedback to each other and self-evaluated. Participation in the change process was both expected and encouraged. Students maintained a quiet, low-key environment during the hour long taping of the presentations. Administrators were pleased to see the innovation take place, and leadership was evident.

Fullan and Stiegelbauer state that students should be encouraged and empowered to participate as active partners in shaping their learning experience (Ellsworth, 1991, p. 81). By using this technology, it was our intention, as educators, to blend education and change. District administrators had been the critical resource of initiating this innovation. The innovation was launched within the school, which was dependent on district administrator's support of the process.

In alliance with the Concerns Based Adoption Model, the change facilitator understood how his/her clients perceived change, and adjusted the instruction accordingly. Needs and timelines of the change were also considered (Ellsworth, 1991, p. 135).

Over, it was found that the use of the web cam In the classroom was a highly successful innovation, and students found it to be fun, exciting and diverse as a tool for education in the classroom. There could be many more varied ways in which to implement it in the technological times. It was a change that could benefit curriculum developers, instructors, students (including distance learners), researchers and administrators.

References

Ellsworth, James B. (1991). *Surviving Change: A survey of Educational Change Models*. Syracuse University. Syracuse, New York.